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NEW WEAPONS AND ARMS CONTROL

ANNCR:

UNDER A LAW PASSED LATE LAST YEAR, THE ADMINISTRATION IS REQUIRED TO INFORM CONGRESS ABOUT THE IMPACT THAT ANY NEW MAJOR WEAPONS SYSTEM WOULD OR COULD HAVE ON ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT POLICY OR NEGOTIATIONS. VOA NEWS ANALYST JOHN ALBERT EXPLAINS THE MEANING OF THIS UNIQUE AND IMPORTANT LEGISLATION:

VOICE:

THE LAW SPEAKS OF "ARMS CONTROL IMPACT STATEMENTS" THAT IN THE FUTURE MUST ACCOMPANY ALL REQUESTS FOR NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS COSTING ABOVE A CERTAIN DOLLAR AMOUNT. WHAT IS MEANT IS THAT THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT CANNOT SIMPLY REQUEST MONEY FOR NEW WEAPONS WITH THE SINGLE ARGUMENT THAT THEY ARE NEEDED FOR DEFENSE. IT MUST ALSO, AFTER DUE ANALYSIS, EXPLAIN THE POSSIBLE IMPACT SUCH NEW WEAPONS COULD HAVE ON ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS. (OPT) IN OTHER WORDS, THERE MUST BE A CLOSE COORDINATION BETWEEN WHAT IS REGARDED AS DESIRABLE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND WHAT IS NEEDED TO FURTHER EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL ARMS CONTROL. (END OPT) IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS, RESTRAINT WILL BE CALLED FOR IN DEVELOPING A NEW WEAPONS SYSTEM, BECAUSE IT IS FELT THAT IT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE STRATEGIC BALANCE OR UNDULY HAMPER ONGOING ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS.

THE BASIC IDEA OF RESTRAINT IN DEVELOPING NEW WEAPONS IS NOT NEW IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS COUNTRY HAS REPEATEDLY FOREGONE THE DEVELOPMENT OF CERTAIN WEAPONS SYSTEMS EVEN

WHILE HOLDING A SUPERIOR NUCLEAR POSITION, BECAUSE IT FELT THEY WOULD TEND TO DESTABILIZE THE STRATEGIC BALANCE AND ENCOURAGE THE ARMS RACE. THE OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF THIS RESTRAINT WAS THE AMERICAN DECISION NOT TO DEVELOP A SUPERIOR NATIONWIDE ANTI-MISSILE DEFENSE. THE U.S., INSTEAD, DECIDED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE SOVIET UNION FOR A SEVERE RESTRICTION ON ABM SYSTEMS IN BOTH COUNTRIES. THE RESULT, OF COURSE, WAS THE 1972 ABM TREATY WHICH NOW RESTRICTS EACH NATION TO ONE ABM INSTALLATION.

UNDER THE NEW LAW, THE ADMINISTRATION IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT EVERY MAJOR NEW WEAPON IT PROPOSES TO THE SCRUTINY OF EXPERTS FOR ITS IMPACT ON ARMS CONTROL AND ON NEGOTIATIONS RELATED TO IT. (OPT) THUS, THE CRUISE MISSILE OR THE B-1 BOMBER, AS WELL AS MORE THAN A DOZEN OTHER WEAPONS SYSTEMS, WILL HAVE TO BE EXPLAINED TO CONGRESS NOT ONLY IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL DEFENSE, BUT ALSO TO ARMS CONTROL. (END OPT)

THE UNITED STATES HAS AN ORGANIZATION UNIQUELY EQUIPPED FOR SUCH RESEARCH AND EVALUATION -- THE ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY, A BODY NOT FOUND IN ANY OTHER COUNTRY. THIS AGENCY WILL CARRY OUT INDEPENDENT RESEARCH ON ALL MAJOR WEAPONS AND REPORT ITS FINDINGS TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ALSO WILL HAVE ITS SAY, AND THE COUNCIL WILL WORK OUT THE FINAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR CONGRESS. CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES CAN CONSULT THE ARMS CONTROL AGENCY DIRECTLY ON ANY SUCH IMPACT STATEMENTS.

THIS LEGISLATION HAS ENHANCED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARMS CONTROL AGENCY IN THE OVERALL FORMULATION OF DEFENSE POLICIES AND THEIR IMPLICATION FOR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO SLOW DOWN AND REVERSE THE STRATEGIC ARMAMENT RACE. RESTRAINT IN THE ARMS BUILDUP AND IN DEVELOPING NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS OBVIOUSLY IS A MAJOR PRECONDITION FOR EFFECTIVE ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS. AND IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT OTHER NATIONS, SUCH AS THE SOVIET UNION, WILL SUBJECT THEIR DEFENSE EFFORTS TO SIMILAR SCRUTINY. AS DESIRABLE AS CERTAIN WEAPONS MAY BE FOR DEFENSIVE STRENGTH, THEY MAY TURN OUT TO BE UNDESIREABLE BECAUSE OF THEIR IMPACT ON ARMS CONTROL MEASURES.

FURTHERMORE, IN CONSIDERING SUCH NEW WEAPONS, BOTH MAJOR POWERS INCREASINGLY WILL HAVE TO ASK THEMSELVES WHETHER THEY CAN BE EFFECTIVELY CONTROLLED THROUGH AVAILABLE VERIFICATION MEASURES. WITHOUT SUCH CONSIDERATIONS AND WITHOUT REASONABLE RESTRAINT, BOTH NATIONS COULD SEVERELY COMPLICATE THEIR EFFORTS TO AGREE ON EFFECTIVE LIMITS TO THE ARMS RACE, AND EVENTUALLY ON REDUCED STRATEGIC ARMAMENTS.

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